

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8728

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USMISSION IAEA VIENNA PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 10181

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FR, TECH

SUBJECT: AN OVERVIEW OF FRENCH POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING
NUCLEAR EXPORTS

REF: A) PARIS 22150 B) PARIS 141 C) STATE 82055

SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO U.S. OVERTURES, THE FRENCH
HAVE SHOWN SIGNS OF MODERATING THEIR TRADITIONAL
ALOOFNESS FROM INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS TO SAFEGUARD
NUCLEAR EXPORTS. PROGRESS, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE
EXAGGERATED. FRENCH SAFEGUARDS POLICY STILL EXISTS
WITHIN THE SAME LIMITATIONS, SET BY HISTORY AND
FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATIONS. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE,
THE FRENCH ARE SINCERELY COMMITTED TO PREVENTING
PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND THEY SEEM
TO REALIZE THE EXTENT OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE
OF TODAY'S NUCLEAR INDUSTRY. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE
ARE THE FOLLOWING LIMITATIONS:

- 1) THEIR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE NPT OR ANY AGREE-
MENT IMPOSING THE FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENT
OF THE NPT,
- 2) RELUCTANCE TO JOIN A NUCLEAR CLUB WHICH MIGHT DIS-
CRIMINATE AGAINST THEIR THIRD WORLD CLIENTS,
- 3) INTENTION TO MAINTAIN FUTURE FREEDOM OF ACTION
AND AVOID BINDING LEGAL REGIMES,

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- 4) CYNICISM THAT ANY SAFEGUARDS SYSTEM CAN DETER

DETERMINED, MODERATELY ADVANCED NATIONS FROM
NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY, AND

5) DESIRE TO BECOME A MAJOR NUCLEAR EXPORTER.

END SUMMARY.

1. THE FRENCH SAFEGUARDS POSITION, STRIPPED OF
ITS AIR OF COOPERATIVENESS, REPRESENTS AN
ADVANCE FROM WHAT IT WAS LAST SEPTEMBER (REF A),
BUT NOT A GREAT ADVANCE. THE SAME POSITIVE AND
NEGATIVE FACTORS APPEAR TO BE IN PLAY NOW AS THEN.

2) AS LIMITING FACTORS TO FRENCH
FLEXIBILITY, WE LIST THE FOLLOWING:

A) NONPROLIFERATION TREATY: THE FRENCH HAVE SHOWN
NO SIGN OF REVERSING THEIR
TRADITIONAL NPT POLICY:

THEY WILL NEITHER JOIN THE NPT, ACCEPT AN AGREEMENT THAT
IS A FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENT OF THE NPT, NOR, MORE GENER-
ALLY, DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN NUCLEAR AND
NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES.

B) CYNICISM: THE FRENCH ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT ANY
SAFEGUARDS SYSTEM CAN PREVENT A DETERMINED, MODERATELY
ADVANCED NATION FROM DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. AFTER
ALL, DESPITE U.S. OPPOSITION, THE FRENCH THEMSELVES DID
IT. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE FRENCH DOUBT THAT REPROCESS-
ING CAPABILITY, AT LEAST ON NON-INDUSTRIAL SCALE RE-
QUIRED TO OBTAIN PLUTONIUM FOR WEAPONS, CAN BE KEPT
FROM MODERATELY ADVANCED NATIONS. THEY ARGUE THAT THE
EQUIPMENT AND KNOW-HOW ARE COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE.
C) NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY: THOUGH WE CAN THINK OF SPECIFIC
EXCEPTIONS (GERMANY), IN GENERAL THE FRENCH RESPECT THE
RIGHT OF SOVEREIGN NATIONS TO CHOOSE THE NUCLEAR WEAPON
OPTION AND WILL TAKE NO ACTION TO PUNISH THOSE NATIONS
WHO SO CHOOSE. THUS THE FRENCH ACCEPTED THE RIGHT OF
INDIA TO GO NUCLEAR AND TOOK NO ACTION TO PUNISH THE
INDIANS. (THEY EVEN SENT A CONGRATULATORY NOTE.)

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D) GLOBALISM AND NONALIGNMENT: THE FRENCH AVOID ASSOCIATIONS THAT WOULD ALIGN FRANCE IN OPPOSITION TO THE THIRD WORLD. THUS THEY WILL BE RELUCTANT TO JOIN A "CLUB" OF ADVANCED COUNTRIES WHICH WILL SET RESTRICTIONS MAINLY DIRECTED AT

THIRD WORLD NATIONS. THEY WILL AVOID DE FACTO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THIRD WORLD NATIONS, RESULTING FROM HAVING DIFFERENT CRITERIA FOR EXPORTING TO NUCLEAR STATES AS OPPOSED TO NON-NUCLEAR STATES, OR TO "SENSITIVE" REGIONS AS OPPOSED TO STABLE REGIONS.

E) FREEDOM OF ACTION: THE FRENCH TEND ALSO TO AVOID COMMITMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL REGIMES THAT MAY CONSTRAIN THEIR FUTURE FREEDOM OF ACTION TO MEET UNFORESEEABLE SITUATIONS. THEY ARE WARY OF LEGALISTIC AND INSTITUTIONALISTIC APPROACHES TO SOLVING WORLD PROBLEMS. THUS IN THE BILATERAL SAFEGUARDS DISCUSSIONS, THEY HAVE SHOWN A DISTINCT PREFERENCE FOR CONFIDENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS RATHER THAN PUBLIC, BINDING AGREEMENTS AND NEW INSTITUTIONS.

F) EXPORT AMBITIONS: THE FRENCH BELIEVE THAT GIVEN THE SIZE OF THEIR DOMESTIC MARKET, EXPORTATION IS NECESSARY IF THEY ARE TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOAL OF AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR INDUSTRY (REF B, PARA 27). THEY WANT FULL FREEDOM TO PROMOTE THEIR NUCLEAR EXPORTS. SAUVAGNARGUES ASKED FOR ASSURANCES THAT THE USG WOULD NOT USE THE WESTINGHOUSE AND G.E.

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LICENSES TO HINDER FRENCH NUCLEAR EXPORTS AND WOULD TAKE A LIBERAL ATTITUDE IN COCOM ON THE SALE OF REACTORS TO THE EAST (REF C). (WE HAVE SEEN OTHER RECENT INDICATIONS THAT A DEAL IS BREWING FOR THE SALE OF FRENCH POWER REACTORS TO THE SOVIET UNION.)

3) AS POSITIVE FACTORS, WE LIST THE FOLLOWING:

A) NONPROLIFERATION COMMITMENT:

THE FRENCH ARE GENUINELY COMMITTED TO PREVENTING THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THEY MAINTAIN THAT EXCEPT FOR THE SALE OF THE DIMONA REACTOR TO

ISRAEL, WHICH THEY NOW PROFOUNDLY REGRET, THEIR SAFEGUARD RECORD IS CLEAN. WHEN PRESSED, THEY WILL TYPICALLY POINT TO INSTANCES OF NUCLEAR SALES BY OTHER NATIONS WHICH RUN A GREAT RISK OF PROLIFERATION; FOR EXAMPLE, THE GERMAN SALE OF A REACTOR TO ARGENTINA WITH ONLY A 5-YEAR SAFEGUARDS DURATION. B) THE CONVERSE: JUST AS THEY ARE COMMITTED TO LIMIT PROLIFERATION, THE FRENCH DO NOT WISH TO BE TAGGED FOR PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A NATION TO GO NUCLEAR. THIS WOULD BE UNPOPULAR DOMESTICALLY AND TO SOME EXTENT INTERNATIONALLY. THUS THEY HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH ACCEPTING IAEA SAFEGUARDS, EVEN STRENGTHENED, THOUGH NOT ON AN OBLIGATORY BASIS. C) NUCLEAR INTERDEPENDENCE: THE FRENCH SEEM TO REALIZE THE INTERDEPENDENT NATURE OF THE MODERN NUCLEAR INDUSTRY (REF B, PARA 35). THEIR POWER REACTORS ARE PRODUCED ON G.E. AND WESTINGHOUSE LICENSES, THOUGH THEY HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO BUILD A LIGHT WATER REACTOR ON THEIR OWN (THIS WOULD, HOWEVER, BE COSTLY AND TIME CONSUMING). THEY HAVE FORMED A MULTINATIONAL GROUP, EURODIF, TO BUILD A \$4 OR \$5 BILLION ENRICHMENT PLANT. THEY RECOGNIZE THAT COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. WOULD GREATLY ASSIST THEIR PEACEFUL EXPLOITATION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. THE U.S. HAS A STRONG ADVANTAGE AT PRESENT IN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND A VAST POTENTIAL MARKET. FROM THE U.S., THE

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FRENCH WANT COOPERATION IN URANIUM ENRICHMENT, IN THE SAFE EXPLOITATION OF CONVENTIONAL REACTORS, IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVANCED REACTORS, AND IN THE MARKETING OF THE FRENCH BREEDER. THE FRENCH CAN ACT INDEPENDENTLY, BUT AT FAR GREATER COST THAN THROUGH COOPERATION WITH THE U.S.

D. THE GISCARDIEN NEW LOOK: CERTAINLY THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAS TRIED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. BY STRESSING POSITIVE FACTORS IN OUR RELATIONS. HOWEVER, THIS NEW LOOK DOES NOT MEAN A RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM THE SUBSTANCE OF PREVIOUS GAULLIST FOREIGN POLICIES.

4. CONCLUSION: TO CONCLUDE, WE PRESENT THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS IN HANDLING THE FRENCH DURING MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

A) ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE FACTORS, THAT IS, THE SLOWING OF PROLIFERATION AND THE ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR INDUSTRY.

B) SEEK THE SUBSTANCE OF AGREEMENT IF THE FORM APPEARS UNLIKELY OF AGREEMENT. THE FRENCH WILL BE RELUCTANT TO PUBLICLY CHANGE POLICY OR TO ALIGN WITH AN EXPORTER'S CLUB.

C) INCLUDE IN THE U.S. DELEGATION TECHNICAL EXPERTISE CAPABLE OF CONTENDING WITH THE FRENCH DELEGATION ADVISER GOLDSCHMIDT. HE IS AN EXPERIENCED NUCLEAR SCIENTIST.
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TIST, A SCIENCE HISTORIAN AND A NUCLEAR POLICY EXPERT. TYPICALLY, HE USES HIS VAST TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE TO GREAT ADVANTAGE.

D) DO NOT EXPECT MUCH FURTHER FLEXIBILITY; FOR EXAMPLE, THE FRENCH ARE NOT LIKELY TO ACCEPT THE NPT, ITS FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENT, MEMBERSHIP IN A SUPPLIER'S CLUB, OR IMPOSITION OF INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS AGAINST NATIONS VIOLATING SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENTS.
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